Unit .19

Session .03

Jesus, the Deliverer, is Born

Scripture

Luke 1:26-33, 51-55; 2:4-7

26 In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, **27** to a virgin engaged to a man named Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. **28** And the angel came to her and said, "Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you." **29** But she was deeply troubled by this statement, wondering what kind of greeting this could be. **30** Then the angel told her: "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. **31** Now listen: You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. **32** He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David. **33** He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and his kingdom will have no end."… **51** He has done a mighty deed with his arm; he has scattered the proud because of the thoughts of their hearts; **52** he has toppled the mighty from their thrones and exalted the lowly. **53** He has satisfied the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty. **54** He has helped his servant Israel, remembering his mercy **55** to Abraham and his descendants forever, just as he spoke to our ancestors. … **4** Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family line of David, **5** to be registered along with Mary, who was engaged to him and was pregnant. **6** While they were there, the time came for her to give birth. **7** Then she gave birth to her firstborn son, and she wrapped him tightly in cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

Intro Options

Main Point:
God's long-awaited Savior and Messiah is born—and His name is Jesus!

Option 1

Your students should pretend they are journalists. They have just been given a headline: "Most Important Birth in Recent History Occurred this Morning." Their job now is to write the story (they'll obviously be making it up).

Students could take several different approaches. Two or three students might do a short news clip (a skit) featuring two anchors, or maybe an interview between an anchor and a talking head. A student working alone might write up a short article or a post on the network's social media feed.

Students are free to come up with the story of their choosing: perhaps they are reporting on the birth of a tycoon, or a miracle birth made possible by science, or a child was born with genes that might be useful in eradicating disease.

Let students prep their stories and then share them. Who do you think had the most important birth? Why? Segue into today's lesson by pointing out that Jesus' birth was far more important. Ask them to suggest why Jesus' birth is more important than even their stories.

Option 2

Your students have discovered the location to another Cave of Wonders (like in *Aladdin*) containing another lamp with another genie. This time, it doesn't have to be a particular "diamond in the rough" who retrieves the lamp, but this lamp is a one-time use: it can only be rubbed once, and then the genie will no longer come out. Your students have to prepare their three wishes wisely.

One more prerequisite: your students can only make wishes for the benefit of all humanity. Put another way, they can only ask for wishes to meet humanity's three greatest needs.

Ask each student to think up what his or her three wishes for humanity would be. Have everyone share them. Start pairing them down. Of all the wishes you come up with, what are the ten most important ones? Then vote for each of the ten: whatever three get the top number of votes, those will be the wishes you send to the genie. See what your students come up with.

Today's lesson will be about how Jesus was born to fulfill three promised roles: eternal king, might savior, and humble servant. Did any of your wishes line up with humanity's need for a king, a savior, and a servant?

TEACHING PLAN

Read Luke 1:26-33.

Gabriel's greeting troubled Mary. What did the angel mean when he said she was "favored?" Gabriel responded, as angels often do, with poetry. The passage began with two Greek words—their most literal translation being "no fear"—often heard from the lips of angels.

The angel's poem addressed Mary's fears. He told her that God would show her favor by giving her a Son, who would be called "Yeshua" (Jesus). He would be the fulfillment of the promise God made to David and his descendants. Jesus, the firstborn son through the marriage of Mary and Joseph, would continue on the line of King David. Joseph was of the house of David and now his legal son, Jesus, would be of the royal lineage as well. However, Jesus was not solely the son of Mary and Joseph; He was, of course, also the very Son of God.

If we were to continue to read in this section, we would see that Mary responded with faith. She declared herself to be the servant of the Lord, her master. This was her identity. After all, servants have no choices; they surrender themselves to their masters. Even though there was much that Mary did not know, she had a deep-rooted faith and trust, and that is where her submissive spirit came from. She was ready to submit to God's difficult plan for her life.

- **Mary didn't fully know God's plan, but was willing to fully trust in God's character to work all things for good. How can we apply the same principle in our own lives?**

Read Luke 1:51-55.

These words—part of what is called Mary's song (vv. 46-56)—are the second half of Mary's celebration of God's grace. Mary's song concluded with a chorus that celebrated the truth that the world would be turned upside down. The God of the Gospels is a God who is always in the process of turning the world upside down. The new hope that was born—the hope that is the subject of so many songs in the Scriptures—was granted to the outsiders, to the poor in spirit. In order to be rich, we learn to let go of our riches. In order to become wise, we embrace the foolishness of the cross. In order to become mature, we become like little children. In order to become truly free, we become slaves. Jesus won everything by losing everything.

99 Essential Doctrines (p. 24, DDG)

Christ's Humiliation

Although God the Son was equal with God and worthy of all the glory God receives, He chose to humble Himself by taking on human flesh. He left His glorious state and came in the likeness of sinful flesh (Rom. 8:3), and He experienced a humiliating death on a cross (Phil. 2:6-8) by becoming sin for us so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God (2 Cor. 5:21).

COMMENTARY

Main Point:
God's long-awaited Savior and Messiah is born—and His name is Jesus!

Luke 1

26-33. Through this same encounter with the angel Gabriel, Mary would learn that her son will be conceived through the Holy Spirit. Luke intentionally emphasizes the fact that Jesus was born of a virgin. Here in verse 27 he states it twice, and Mary herself confirms this truth in verse 34. Later on in Luke 2:5, Luke refers to Mary and Joseph as still engaged, again emphasizing her virginity and the miraculous origins of Jesus. It is unlikely that they would have traveled together for the census if they were not yet married. Instead, Luke is likely continuing his emphasis on the virginity of Mary through the use of the word "engaged" (or "betrothed"). Though she and Joseph were most likely legally married at this point, the marriage had not yet been physically consummated.[2]

These are all indeed important details. If Jesus was not conceived by the Holy Spirit, He would simply be another son of Adam. Instead, He was the uncorrupted human son of God in the truest sense and did not receive the in-born sin nature the rest of mankind inherited. However, through her marriage to Joseph, Jesus would also become a son of David by legal adoption. This miraculous conception points to Christ's divine innocence. The adoption of Jesus by His earthly father Joseph proves Christ's royal human lineage.

51-53. "Verses 51-53 give us the signs that God's mercy is for all. There are no more virgin births, and we're unlikely to be in a Jewish temple when an angel visits; but we can see the work of God every day. That's what Mary celebrates. Don't ask God for a sign his promise will be fulfilled. We are simply to look around to see fulfillment. There are signs posted everywhere for all us 'nobodies.' God scatters the proud (v. 51). God topples the mighty (v. 52). God sends the rich away empty (v. 53). But the Lord exalts the lowly—that's the projects and the hoods (v. 52). He fills the hungry (v. 53). If we would know the riches of God's mercy, we simply need to admit the poverty of our lives. Mary has confidence that God fulfills his plans and keeps his promises (vv. 54-55). He has helped Israel. He has remembered his mercy. All that he said to Abraham and Abraham's descendants is about to come to pass. And indeed it did. Christ was born as promised. He lived a sinless life. He offered righteousness to God in our place. He died a sinner's death, suffering the wrath of God in our place on Calvary's cross. He satisfied God's anger, and three days later God raised him from the dead—proving that the Father accepted the Son's sacrifice on our behalf. Now God calls all men everywhere to repent of their sins and to trust in Jesus as their Lord and Savior."[3]

In Defense (p. 26, DDG)

"Some argue that Bethlehem would not have had an inn since it was not on any major road, and that this story is therefore fictitious. But attempting to claim the nonexistence of an inn in Bethlehem is mere conjecture, and besides, the Greek term translated 'inn' (*kataluma*) simply means "lodging" and can refer to a guest room in a private home. Animal stalls, with their mangers, were normally located inside the one-room residence of peasant families. Animals were sometimes kept in caves, and an early Christian tradition places the birth of Jesus in a cave."[4]

TEACHING PLAN

- **Name two or three of your favorite songs that magnify the Lord for His goodness and mercy. Why do these songs resonate with you? What aspects of God's character do they celebrate?**
- **Have you seen evidence of God's upside-down kingdom in your own life? How does your church display an upside-down kingdom?**

After more than four hundred years of silence, God's people must have doubted that He had remembered them. Promises looked to be broken. His people seemed to be abandoned. Yet all along, God was working. And at the fullness of time, a merciful Father continued His rescue plan in just the right place, and delivered His people from the bondage of sin and penalty of death.

Read Luke 2:4-7.

The God of the universe, the one who spoke the heavens and the earth into existence, the one through whom all things were made and who holds all things together—the very source of life—became human in order to redeem the world. He set aside unlimited power and knowledge, perfect comfort and pleasures, and all-encompassing rights and privileges to be with us as one of us.

Jesus, the eternal Son of God, not only too on our flesh but also our deserved condemnation. Motivated by reverent obedience, complete submission, and desire to bring glory and honor to His Father, the Son of God emptied and humbled Himself by becoming like us in order to rescue us.

- **When have you given up a privilege for the sake of others? How did that make you feel?**

God the Son's incarnation led to action after action of continual sacrifice. Jesus' life on earth was marked by surrender and sacrifice. Though He was deserving of all dedication, He came to serve, not to be served. He chose selflessness again and again and again. Even up to the last hours before His death, when He knew the time of His death had arrived, He declared to God, "Not my will, but yours, be done" (Luke 22:42). Just as He began His journey on earth, with humility and surrender, Jesus once again chose submission and self-sacrifice. He followed God's will to the cross, leading to salvation for all who would trust in Him.

- **What keeps you from surrendering all of your life to God?**

COMMENTARY

Main Point:
God's long-awaited Savior and Messiah is born—and His name is Jesus!

Luke 2

4-7. Luke recounted the nativity of Jesus in four simple verses. Joseph made the trip from Galilee south to Judea and to Bethlehem, a city that sat in the shadow of Herod's fortresses. Mary, his pregnant fiancé, was with him because the two of them would be included in the census.

Activity

Ask your students to come up with as many roles as possible that middle schoolers fill. Daughter, brother, team member, band member, chore-doer, gamer, athlete, dog-walker, grandchild, you name it. Be as extensive as possible in this list.

Put your students in groups of two or threes. Assign each small group one of the roles from your list.

Next, have a representative from each group roll a die. Based on the number they roll, they will be assigned one of Jesus' three roles:

1-2 = eternal king

3-4 = mighty savior

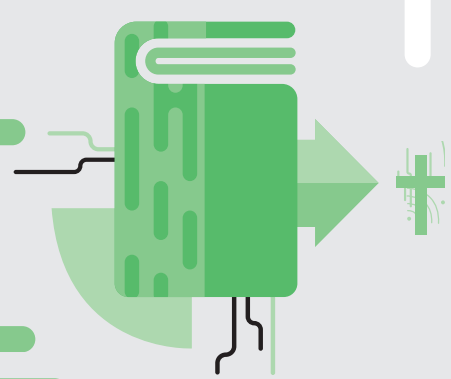
5-6 = humble servant

Their job is now to produce either a drawing or a skit showing a middle schooler in their assigned role with Jesus as their king/savior/servant in that role. For example, a ball player might recognize Jesus as king by playing by the rules or loving his teammates or opponents as himself. A sister might look to Jesus as mighty savior to find grace to ask forgiveness after a spat with a sibling. A band member might recognize Jesus as humble servant by relying on Jesus for strength to keep practicing faithfully day after day.

Pray to the Holy Spirit to help you and your students live under Jesus' kingship, salvation, and servanthood in all your roles this week.

(p. 25, DDG) Christ Connection

The birth of Jesus fulfilled many Old Testament promises concerning the coming Messiah. Jesus was born in humble circumstances to be the Suffering Servant who would lay down His life to be our mighty Savior. One day, Jesus will return as our eternal King.



LESSON 41: AVAILABILITY
JESUS, THE DELIVERER, IS BORN

Luke 1:26–33, 51–55; 2:4–7

JESUS, THE DELIVERER, IS BORN

God's long-awaited Savior and Messiah is born—and His name is Jesus!

JESUS CONNECTION

The birth of Jesus fulfilled many Old Testament promises about the coming of the Messiah. Jesus was born in humble circumstances and chosen as the Servant who would lay down His life to save us from sin.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

AVAILABILITY – Being willing to do my part.

HEAD

Fill in any facts that the angel Gabriel told Mary about her role in the Savior's birth. (*Hint: some info may be missing.*)

- Who:
- What:
- Why:
- How:
- Where:

What are some ways the angel Gabriel described Jesus?

HEART

Mary didn't fully understand how God's plan would come about, but she was willing to move forward with God's plan. What one truth about God convinced her to make herself available (Luke 1:37)? How likely are you to want to know more before you make yourself available to others? To God? Why is knowing more *not* always helpful?

What keeps you from being available to others? (*Examples: lack of time, selfishness, fear, your age, etc.*) What are some ways you can overcome these obstacles?

HANDS

Choose two people (one at home or in your neighborhood and one at school, a sport or activity, church, etc.) this week. Carve out time to make yourself available to them by asking one question: "Is there anything I can do to help you right now?" Then, do that thing.